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No. 17

Senate

The Senate met at 9:45 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARY L. LANDRIEU, a Senator from the State of Louisiana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, Sovereign of history and personal Lord of our lives, today we join with Jews throughout the world in the joyous celebration of Purim. We thank You for the inspiring memory of Queen Esther who, in the fifth century B.C., threw caution to the wind and interceded with her husband, the King of Persia, to save the exiled Jewish people from persecution. The words of Mordecai to her, sound in our souls: "... You have come to the kingdom for such a time as this."—Esther 4:14.

Lord of circumstances, we are moved profoundly by the way You use individuals to accomplish Your plans and arrange what seems to be a coincidence to bring about Your will for Your people. You have brought each of us to Your kingdom for such a time as this. You whisper in our souls, "I have plans for you, plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."—Jeremiah 29:11.

Grant the Senators a heightened sense of the special role You have for each of them to play in Your unfolding drama of American history. Give them a sense of destiny and a deep dependence upon Your guidance and grace.

Today, during Purim, we renew our commitment to fight against sectarian intolerance in our own hearts and religious persecution in so many places in our world. This is Your world; let us not forget that "though the wrong seems off so strong, You are the Ruler yet." Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARY L. LANDRIEU led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 26, 2002.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARY L. LANDRIEU, a Senator from the State of Louisiana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Ms. LANDRIEU thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, the time between now and 10 o'clock will be for the nomination of Robert Blackburn. The Senator from Colorado is here to speak on this issue. There may be others.

Following this rollcall vote at 10 o'clock, we expect to confirm by voice vote the nomination of Cindy Jorgenson to be a United States district judge. Then Senators DODD and MCCONNELL, as managers of the election reform bill, will begin managing that matter. We hope to complete it today.

The Senate will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 for weekly party conferences, and

at 2:15 today there will be 1 hour of morning business under the control of Senator KERRY for statements regarding Senator KENNEDY's service to his country and his 70th birthday.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF ROBERT E. BLACKBURN TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will go into executive session and proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 673, which the clerk will now report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert E. Blackburn, of Colorado, to be United States District Judge for the District of Colorado.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. will be equally divided.

The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. ALLARD. Madam President, I stand before the Senate today to urge my fellow Members to confirm the nomination of the Honorable Robert E. Blackburn to the United States District Court for the District of Colorado. My colleague from the State of Colorado, Senator BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL, also strongly supports Judge Blackburn's nomination to the United States District Court for the District of Colorado.

The nomination of Judge Blackburn is of particular importance to the State of Colorado because of a 50-percent vacancy rate on the district bench. In the Colorado District today, four judges struggle to do the work of

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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